



Early Career Teacher (ECT) Induction Policy

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Review by:	15/9/27	

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1. Aims and status of statutory induction

ReFocus aims to provide an induction programme that supports early career teachers to develop as confident and effective practitioners, enables them to demonstrate satisfactory performance against the Teachers' Standards and ensures that everyone involved understands their responsibilities.

Statutory induction is not a legal requirement for a teacher working solely in the independent sector. ReFocus may nevertheless choose to offer a post in which an ECT can serve statutory induction. Where it does so, ReFocus will comply with the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, and have regard to the current statutory guidance. An ECT cannot be described as serving statutory induction unless all required arrangements, including appropriate-body oversight, are in place.

This policy applies to any ECT who is serving all or part of statutory induction at ReFocus. An ECT may serve statutory induction only once. Completion is not legally required to remain employed solely in the independent sector, but it is normally required before the teacher can work in a maintained school, non-maintained special school or pupil referral unit, unless an exemption applies.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on sections 135A-C and 141C(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002; the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended; and Induction for early career teachers (England): statutory guidance, June 2026. It also reflects the Teachers' Standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Equality Act 2010 and data-protection requirements.

From 1 September 2025, the Early Career Framework was superseded by the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), and the term Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) replaced "ECF-based training and induction". The ITTECF underpins training and support; it is not an assessment framework. ECT performance is assessed against the Teachers' Standards.

Any exceptional transitional arrangements for an ECT who began induction before September 2021 will be agreed with the appropriate body and recorded in the individual induction plan rather than reproduced in this policy.

3. Before induction begins

3.1 Eligibility and registration

Before the ECT begins statutory induction, the Headteacher will:

- verify QTS and whether the teacher is required or eligible to serve induction using the DfE teacher-record service;
- agree an eligible appropriate body and its charges;
- register the ECT with that body before the start of induction;
- agree the induction start date with the ECT and appropriate body; and

- obtain relevant progress reviews, assessment reports and absence information from any previous induction post.

The induction start date cannot be backdated. It will normally be the date on which the ECT begins teaching in a suitable post after registration, not the date on which provider-led training happens to begin. The appropriate body and training provider are separate functions. Their current names and contacts will be recorded in the ECT's individual induction agreement.

3.2 Suitable post in ReFocus's AP context

The Headteacher and appropriate body must agree that the post is suitable. The proprietor and governing board must be satisfied that ReFocus has the capacity to support the ECT. The post will:

- provide genuine teaching responsibility, including experience of teaching whole classes or suitable teaching groups;
- provide sufficiently regular and sustained teaching to allow fair assessment across the Teachers' Standards;
- include appropriate planning, teaching and assessment and access to relevant curriculum and subject expertise;
- not routinely require teaching outside the age range or subjects for which the ECT was employed;
- not place unreasonable demands on the ECT or routinely allocate the school's most complex behaviour, safeguarding or SEND cases without suitable support;
- provide safeguarding, behaviour and wellbeing support appropriate to alternative provision; and
- enable access to effective practice within ReFocus or another suitable school where phase or subject-specific experience cannot be provided internally.

A small-group or multi-site AP timetable may be suitable, but only where it gives the ECT enough stable teaching experience and breadth to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards fairly. The minimum initial period of continuous employment that can count is one term. After that minimum has been served, subsequent continuous service may be recorded more precisely.

4. The induction programme

4.1 Early Career Teacher Entitlement

A full-time ECT will normally complete the full-time equivalent of two school years. A part-time ECT normally completes the equivalent period pro rata, subject to any reduction or extension agreed by the appropriate body. ReFocus will provide a programme of training and support based on the ITTECF through either a DfE-funded provider-led programme or a school-delivered programme covering the framework in full.

The programme will be embedded within induction and tailored to the ECT's starting points, subject, phase and ReFocus context. It will include:

- a trained induction tutor with QTS, appropriate experience and sufficient time;
- a trained mentor with QTS, appropriate experience and sufficient time;
- regular structured one-to-one mentoring and targeted developmental feedback;
- regular observation of teaching followed by prompt written feedback;
- termly professional progress reviews in terms without a formal assessment;
- opportunities to observe experienced teachers and effective practice; and
- appropriate subject, phase, SEND, safeguarding, behaviour and AP-specific development.

4.2 Reduced timetable and workload

In induction year 1, the ECT will teach no more than 90% of the timetable of an existing ReFocus teacher on the main pay range. In induction year 2, the maximum will be 95%. The reduction applies on a comparable basis to part-time ECTs and is additional to normal planning, preparation and assessment time.

ECT time will be used specifically for induction activities, including ITTECF training, mentoring, observation and professional development. It will not be routinely absorbed by cover, unrelated administration or

additional duties. Mentor meetings should normally take place during teaching hours and must always fall within contracted time.

The ECT will not be given unreasonable demands or additional non-teaching responsibilities without suitable preparation and support. Workload, wellbeing and the effect of multi-site travel will be considered in timetabling.

4.3 Tutor and mentor roles

The induction tutor monitors progress and coordinates assessment; the mentor provides developmental support and structured mentoring. These are distinct roles and should normally be held by different people. One person may fulfil both only exceptionally, with the agreement of the Headteacher and appropriate body, sufficient time and safeguards to ensure mentoring is not conflated with assessment.

5. Monitoring, assessment and completion

5.1 Progress reviews and observation

Teaching will be observed at regular intervals by the induction tutor or another suitable person. The ECT will receive prompt, constructive written feedback. In each term without a formal assessment, the induction tutor will conduct a progress review against the Teachers' Standards, agree development priorities and send the signed record to the ECT, Headteacher and appropriate body.

Evidence will arise naturally from the ECT's work and induction. ReFocus will use the least burdensome approach and will not require an excessive portfolio or new work created solely for assessment. The ECT will be kept informed of their progress so there are no unexpected judgements at formal assessment.

5.2 Formal assessments

Formal assessments will normally take place at the end of induction year 1 and at the end of induction year 2, or at the equivalent points for a part-time ECT. The induction tutor will coordinate and normally conduct the meetings, drawing on existing evidence and relevant contributions from colleagues. Assessment will be against the Teachers' Standards, taking account of the ECT's work context and what can reasonably be expected by that stage. The ITTECF will not be used as an assessment tool.

A report will be completed for both formal assessments. The ECT will receive the evidence relied on, be told the proposed judgements and be invited to add comments. Reports will be signed by the ECT, induction tutor and Headteacher. A copy will be sent to the appropriate body shortly after each meeting and the final report within ten working days of the final assessment meeting.

5.3 Completion and appeal

The Headteacher makes the final recommendation. The appropriate body makes the decision, normally within 20 working days of receiving the recommendation, that the ECT has completed induction satisfactorily, requires an extension or has failed. The appropriate body provides the required notifications. Where it decides to extend or fail induction, it must explain the right and deadline to appeal to the Teaching Regulation Agency, normally within 20 working days.

5.4 Interim assessments

Where an ECT leaves after completing at least one term but before the next formal assessment, the induction tutor or Headteacher will normally complete an interim assessment before departure, including where the ECT leaves during the final term. It will record progress, performance, induction completed, working pattern, absences, concerns and support. If the ECT is absent and does not return, the report will still be completed and shared with the ECT and appropriate body.

6. Absence and special circumstances

ReFocus will maintain accurate records of employment, working pattern and absence for each induction year and notify the appropriate body when relevant absences reach 30 days. Where non-exempt absences total 30 days or more in an induction year, that year will normally be extended by the aggregate number of days absent, as determined by the appropriate body.

Statutory maternity, paternity, adoption, shared-parental, parental-bereavement, carer's and neonatal-care leave are treated separately. An ECT taking one of these forms of leave may decide whether induction should be extended to reflect the absence. ReFocus will encourage discussion with the appropriate body before that decision is made.

Any reduction, extension, completion across more than one institution, or other special arrangement will be agreed with and decided by the appropriate body under the statutory guidance. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled ECTs in relation to training, mentoring, observation, documentation, meetings and working arrangements without lowering the Teachers' Standards.

7. Unsatisfactory progress and capability

If concerns arise, ReFocus will act promptly rather than wait for the next scheduled review. The induction tutor and Headteacher will meet the ECT, explain the evidence and provide a written support plan identifying:

- the Teachers' Standards and aspects of practice requiring improvement;
- clear objectives, success criteria and review dates;
- additional training, mentoring, observation and other support;
- who will provide the support and how progress will be assessed; and
- the possible consequences if progress remains unsatisfactory.

The appropriate body will be involved early and will receive the relevant progress review or assessment and support plan. Where the ECT is at risk of not completing induction satisfactorily, the Headteacher will arrange an observation by an appropriate third party. The ECT may comment in writing and contact the appropriate body's independent named contact.

Induction and capability are separate processes. In a particularly serious case ReFocus may begin its capability procedure before induction ends. The appropriate body will be informed, and statutory induction will continue in parallel while the ECT remains employed. Dismissal under capability does not itself constitute failure of statutory induction; an interim assessment will be completed when employment ends.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 ECT

- Provide evidence of QTS and relevant previous induction service.
- Agree induction priorities, dates and use of reduced-timetable time with the induction tutor.
- Participate fully in training, mentoring, observation, progress reviews and assessments.
- Provide naturally occurring evidence of progress against the Teachers' Standards and retain copies of reports.
- Record absences accurately and raise concerns promptly with the induction tutor, Headteacher or appropriate-body contact.

8.2 Headteacher

- Complete eligibility checks and secure appropriate-body agreement and registration before induction begins.
- Ensure the post, timetable, training, tutor, mentor and multi-site arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- Ensure progress reviews, formal and interim assessments and absence records are completed and submitted.
- Act early where progress is at risk, involve the appropriate body and arrange third-party observation when required.
- Make the final recommendation and participate in appropriate-body quality assurance.
- Keep the proprietor and governing board appropriately informed and retain required records for six years.

8.3 Induction tutor

- Provide guidance, monitor progress and coordinate observation and assessment.
- Conduct termly progress reviews and the two formal assessments, coordinating evidence from others.
- Share records and judgements transparently with the ECT, Headteacher and appropriate body.
- Use streamlined evidence and act promptly where difficulties arise.

8.4 Mentor

- Meet the ECT regularly for structured developmental mentoring.
- Provide targeted feedback and arrange appropriate subject, phase and AP-specific support.
- Support engagement with the ITTECF programme and act promptly if difficulties arise.

8.5 Proprietor and governing board

The proprietor/owners retain overall legal accountability for ReFocus and ensure that sufficient capacity, staffing, time and resources are available. The governing board provides support, constructive challenge and oversight and should be satisfied that the Headteacher is fulfilling the requirements of a suitable induction post. It does not replace the Headteacher or appropriate body in operational or statutory decision-making.

8.6 Appropriate body

The appropriate body provides independent quality assurance, confirms the suitability of the post and programme, monitors reviews and assessments, supports resolution of concerns and makes decisions on reductions, extensions and final completion. These statutory functions cannot be delegated to the training provider.

9. Concerns, records and confidentiality

An ECT should normally raise concerns with the induction tutor or Headteacher first. If the concern cannot be resolved, or involves those people, the ECT may contact the appropriate body's independent named contact and use ReFocus's grievance procedure. Concerns about the Headteacher may be escalated to the proprietor or nominated governing-board representative.

Induction records will be accurate, secure and shared only where necessary. ReFocus will obtain relevant records from previous settings, provide the ECT with copies of reviews and assessments, notify the appropriate body if the ECT leaves and retain relevant documentation, evidence and forms for six years. Records will be handled under the Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Safeguarding concerns will be managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Information required to protect children will not be withheld because it also relates to induction, mentoring or employment.

10. Monitoring and related policies

The Headteacher will review this policy annually and sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes, the appropriate body requires amendment, or experience shows that arrangements need improvement. The proprietor will approve the policy and the governing board will receive proportionate assurance about implementation.

This policy should be read with:

- Appraisal and Capability Procedures
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Grievance and Whistleblowing Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEND and Reasonable Adjustments arrangements
- Staff Code of Conduct and Staff Wellbeing Policy